
NEWS RELEASE

Judd Gregg



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CHAIRMAN GREGG ANNOUNCES HELP COMMITTEE HEARINGS ON MEDICAL LIABILITY REFORM

WASHINGTON— U.S. Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH), Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee today announced that the Senate HELP Committee will hold hearings in early February on the growing problem of patient access to doctors because of skyrocketing medical liability insurance prices. The February hearings will bring together patients, doctors and other experts to discuss the crisis.

“In my home state of New Hampshire, we have expectant mothers who need the care of pre-natal physicians and we have qualified doctors who want to provide that care, but cannot because incredibly high premiums have driven them out of state or out of business. Trial lawyers have come out of the courtroom and into our nation’s hospitals and waiting rooms to stand between patients needing care and the doctors who are trained to provide it,” Gregg said.

The situation has reached crisis levels in at least 15 states, including West Virginia, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Nevada. Surgeons practicing at a Nevada trauma center saw their premiums jump from \$40,000 to \$200,000 in one year. As a result, many have been forced out of practicing medicine, creating a shortage of available doctors to provide basic medical services like the delivery of babies and trauma care in emergency rooms.

“We need a system that promotes patient safety and fairly compensates patients who are injured as a result of a medical mistake. But we also need to ensure that patients have access to doctors when they need medical care. Unfortunately, our medical liability system is failing on both fronts. It is time for reform. Patients cannot wait,” Gregg said.

“We need to bring common sense reform to this system. The hearings I will chair in the HELP Committee are the first step in that process,” said Gregg.

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